

16 DEC 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : E. H. Knoche  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Planning for Airborne Reconnaissance  
During Crisis Periods

1. Action Requested: The Operations Advisory Group is requested to endorse a JCS plan for developing and conducting airborne reconnaissance missions in potential crisis areas.

2. Basic Data: The Deputy Secretary of Defense has approved a JCS proposal that a means be developed to facilitate more rapid approval and execution of airborne reconnaissance missions in areas of potential crisis or increased tension not normally targetted for routine reconnaissance operations. The JCS proposal stems from several instances over the past several years when approval for certain reconnaissance proposals was delayed or withheld because there was an insufficient base for estimating probable foreign reaction to the proposed missions.

3. As currently conceived, the Joint Reconnaissance Center, JCS, would develop flight plans to areas which may be of interest to US intelligence during crises or other events. These plans, which would not involve the overflight of denied areas or the claimed waters or airspace of target countries, would be submitted regularly as part of the JRC Monthly Reconnaissance Schedule for OAG approval. Once approved, selected missions would be flown during non-crisis periods in order to establish a US reconnaissance "presence" and to assess the target countries reactions to such missions during normal periods.

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JCS and NSC review(s) completed.

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The JCS reasons that with such flight profiles established and normal reactions to them known, the OAG would be provided a better base of data of experience for the approval or disapproval of similar flights during crisis periods.

4. We are not convinced that the JCS plan will serve to achieve the desired objectives. For instance, we are not sure that a countrys' reactions to US reconnaissance during a normal period could form a basis upon which to judge changes in that reaction during a crisis situation. We also believe that in a crisis of any magnitude the intelligence and political requirements for or against new reconnaissance programs would be so strong as to override any experience with prior, non-crisis missions in the same area. Nevertheless, we see no reason to not endorse the JCS planning concept at this time since each proposal developed would be subject to OAG review and approval. Any special conditions bearing on approval could be instituted during this OAG review. We believe that the JCS selection of target areas of potential interest would be benefitted by the experience of the Strategic Warning Staff and would recommend that that staff be consulted.

5. Recommendation: I recommend that you endorse the JCS planning concept and urge the consultation of the Strategic Warning Staff in the development of anticipated crisis areas.

[Redacted Signature]

E. H. Knoche

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CONCUR:  
For the Central Intelligence Agency

[Redacted Signature]

Sayre Stevens  
Deputy Director for Intelligence

15 Dec 76

Date

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During Crisis Periods

COMMENTS:  
For the Intelligence Community Staff

*Concur*

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Deputy to the DCI for the  
Intelligence Community

*20 Dec 76*  
Date

Recommendation contained in paragraph 5 is approved.

*George Bush*  
George Bush  
Director of Central Intelligence

20 DEC 1976

Date

-3-

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Approved For Release 2003/10/21 : CIA-RDP79M00467A000100120003-5

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O/Compt/R&ES/RG:  (14 December 1976)

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Executive Registry

176-10551

NSC REVIEW  
COMPLETED

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

6 December 1976

## OAG CONTACTS:

Attached are two items which we expect to include on the agenda for the next (as yet unscheduled) OAG meeting of our principals.

The first represents the OAG staff's revision of the proposed directive on double agents and deception as a result of our discussion at the OAG Working Group meeting on 3 December and subsequent conversations with interested parties.

The second is a reconnaissance item submitted by the Deputy Secretary of Defense. ✓

I know of nothing else for the agenda or what probably will be the final meeting of the OAG in this administration..



Rob Roy Ratliff  
Executive Secretary  
Operations Advisory Group

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

2 DEC 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, OPERATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

SUBJECT: Reconnaissance Mission Planning (U)

(S) We are concerned over the manner by which we generate special reconnaissance missions, during crises or periods of increased tension, over areas not routinely covered. In the past, some of these missions have been disapproved simply because of the uncertainty surrounding what reaction the sudden introduction of U.S. reconnaissance platforms into those areas might cause. We believe that we should be able to anticipate potential hot spots and schedule routine missions on varied tracks into those areas during periods of relative calm. By so doing, we would be less likely to arouse sensitivities and precipitate hostile reactions when missions are flown during crises.

(S) Accordingly, at my request, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) have reviewed our current mission planning concepts and have recommended the following course of action:

1. That a list of potential "special interest" areas be identified for track development.
2. That missions in these areas be scheduled on a selective basis during periods of relative calm.
3. That the closest point of approach on the above tracks, and on tracks in areas where reconnaissance operations are regularly conducted, be selectively varied.
4. That tracks developed under this concept be subject to present review and approval procedures and not change present policy of nonpenetration of territory, territorial waters, or airspace claimed by foreign sovereign nations to a maximum distance of 12 nautical miles.

(S) I find the JCS proposal to be a logical and prudent approach. The Chairman, JCS and I believe we must improve responsiveness while reducing

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the probability of adverse political or military reaction when missions are flown during crises. Consequently, I request OAG endorsement of the outlined planning concept. Once endorsed, missions developed under this approach will be submitted for specific track approval as part of the monthly reconnaissance schedule.



cc:  
Chairman, JCS

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16 Dec 76

Frank: Attached is a briefing memo for Mr. Knoche's signature. It concerns an item on the agenda for the next OAG meeting, whenever that may be.

I did not obtain the concurrence of the DDS&T or DDO in this case since it is not the regular briefing memo on the monthly schedule, and since I believe it is primarily a DDI item. The DDS&T and DDO will be consulted when, and if, the concept turns into definite proposals.

Please call me when Mr. Knoche has signed.

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Date 15 Dec 1976

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M.D. 0001-77(77)

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